HOUSE OF COMMONS
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CANADA

REPORT 5, PREPARING WOMEN OFFENDERS FOR RELEASE—CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA, OF THE 2017 FALL REPORTS OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL OF CANADA

Report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts

The Honourable Kevin Sorenson, Chair

MAY 2018
42nd PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

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Reports from committee presented to the House of Commons

Presenting a report to the House is the way a committee makes public its findings and recommendations on a particular topic. Substantive reports on a subject-matter study usually contain a synopsis of the testimony heard, the recommendations made by the committee, as well as the reasons for those recommendations.

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THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

has the honour to present its

FORTY-SEVENTH REPORT

Pursuant to its mandate under Standing Order 108(3)(*g*), the Committee has studied Report 5, Preparing Women Offenders for Release—Correctional Service Canada, of the 2017 Fall Reports of the Auditor General of Canada and has agreed to report the following:

HOUSE OF COMMONS
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REPORT 5, PREPARING WOMEN OFFENDERS FOR RELEASE—CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA, OF THE 2017 FALL REPORTS OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL OF CANADA

INTRODUCTION

According to the Office of the Auditor General of Canada (OAG), "Correctional Service Canada (CSC) is responsible for the safe and secure custody of women offenders serving sentences of two years or more, and for preparing them for successful reintegration into the community upon release. It must also adopt programs and policies that are responsive to the unique needs of women offenders, including Indigenous women."[1]

In addition, the "number of women offenders serving federal sentences has increased by 38 percent over the last decade.... Currently, 36 percent of women offenders in custody identify as Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, or Inuit)."[2] Many women offenders in federal custody have young children, suffer from mental disorders, have histories of drug or alcohol misuse, are victims of physical abuse or have attempted suicide.[3]

The OAG further reported that, in the early 1990s, CSC closed the only institution for federal women offenders, located in Kingston, and replaced it with five regional institutions.[4] During the same period, "CSC also introduced a new correctional approach for women offenders, recognizing that women offenders have different paths to crime than men offenders. In consultation with corrections experts, CSC developed programs to address the risk factors that are directly linked to women offenders' criminal behaviour."[5]

The OAG released an audit in the fall of 2017 that focused on whether CSC "assigned and delivered correctional programs, interventions, and mental health services to women offenders in federal custody—including Indigenous women offenders—that

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1 Office of the Auditor General of Canada (OAG), Preparing Women Offenders for Release—Correctional Service Canada, Report 5 of the 2017 Fall Reports of the Auditor General of Canada, para. 5.1.

2 Ibid., para. 5.2.

3 Ibid., para. 5.3.

4 Ibid., para. 5.4.

5 Ibid., para. 5.5.

responded appropriately to their unique needs and helped them successfully reintegrate into the community."[6]

On 17 April 2018, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts met to discuss this audit. The following witnesses were in attendance: Michael Ferguson, Auditor General of Canada, and Carol McCalla, Principal, from the OAG; and Anne Kelly, Interim Commissioner, Kelley Blanchette, Deputy Commissioner for Women, and Jennifer Wheatley, Assistant Commissioner, Health Services, from CSC.[7]

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Security Classification and Rehabilitation Requirements

A. Security Classification

The OAG reported that CSC "had not implemented an initial security classification process specifically for women offenders. Instead, CSC determined women offenders' initial security levels using the Custody Rating Scale, a tool developed more than 25 years ago based on a sample of male offenders."[8]

The OAG found that, "in nearly all cases in the 2015–16 fiscal year, [CSC] obtained an official document concerning the offence to complete the intake assessment. However, CSC obtained the victim impact statement prior to completing the intake assessment in only 74 percent of the cases for which statements were available. CSC also requires other information about offenders—such as information about previous offences—but it often did not receive all of the requested information in time to consider it in its intake assessments."[9]

CSC used the Custody Rating Scale "along with staff's professional judgment, to determine whether to set a woman offender's initial security level at maximum, medium, or minimum."[10] According to the OAG, "research found that certain factors considered by the scale could be re-examined to better assess the risks posed by women offenders, such as

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6 Ibid., para. 5.6.

7 House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 17 April 2018, Meeting No. 92.

8 OAG, Preparing Women Offenders for Release—Correctional Service Canada, Report 5 of the 2017 Fall Reports of the Auditor General of Canada, para. 5.14.

9 Ibid., para. 5.20.

10 Ibid., para. 5.22.

substance misuse or family dysfunction. To date, CSC has made no changes to the way it uses the tool for initial security classification."[11]

The OAG noted that, "in each of the past three fiscal years (from 2014–15 to 2016–17), staff overrode the Custody Rating Scale's results in about 31 percent of intake security assessments. However, CSC research found that its staff's final security classification at intake—allowing for overrides—was more accurate than the scale's recommendations."[12]

According to the OAG, CSC "has developed a security reclassification tool specifically for women offenders: the Security Reclassification Scale for Women. This scale considers the offender's behaviour while in the institution, including her progress in correctional programs, and positive contact with her family."[13]

The OAG found that "CSC staff frequently overrode the results indicated by the Security Reclassification Scale for Women"[14] and that "reviews were completed as required but that half of them took place after the offenders were eligible for release. This is important because research has shown that when offenders can be safely moved to lower levels of security before release, they are more likely to successfully reintegrate into the community. Offenders are more likely to be granted parole from minimum security than from higher levels."[15]

Therefore, the OAG made the following recommendation:

> Correctional Service Canada should examine ways to improve the initial security classification process to appropriately consider the risk factors for women offenders. Where appropriate, security classification reviews should continue to be used to support an offender's successful reintegration into the community. The level of overrides of the security reclassification scale should be monitored to ensure the scale is being used as intended.[16]

In response, the Interim Commissioner explained that, "with respect to improving the initial security classification process, CSC is conducting research to identify risk factors relevant to women. This will determine what revisions to our initial security classification

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11 Ibid., para. 5.23.

12 Ibid., para. 5.24.

13 Ibid., para. 5.25.

14 Ibid., para. 5.26.

15 Ibid., para. 5.27.

16 Ibid., para. 5.28.

tool, if any, may be required to increase its validity for women offenders."[17] Furthermore, CSC's action plan states that reporting on the results relating to the validity of the assessment tools will be presented to CSC's Executive Committee in May 2018. By December 2018, a "literature review will be conducted to identify risk factors relevant to women offenders and their potential role in the security classification process."[18]

Consequently, the Committee recommends:

Recommendation 1 – Regarding the initial security classification and overrides

That *Correctional Service Canada* (CSC) provide the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts with: A) a report outlining the results of CSC's study on the validity of the security classification tools by 30 June 2018; and, B) a report on the literature review regarding risk factors relevant to women offenders and their potential role in the security classification process by 31 December 2018.

B. Assignment of Correctional Programs

The OAG found that CSC "used the Custody Rating Scale to base its referral of a woman offender to a correctional program. However, the scale was designed to determine security classification, not to assign correctional programs. CSC developed the Criminal Risk Index as a more appropriate tool to assign correctional programs. However, by the end of the period covered by the audit, CSC was not yet using this tool for women offenders."[19]

On this topic, the Auditor General of Canada added that "the important thing is that when these women enter into the correctional system, their needs have to be assessed to see what type of programming they need, and that needs to happen very early on. The Correctional Service has many programs in place, and we didn't notice any particular problems with the programs per se. The problems were with the access to the programs."[20]

Therefore, the OAG made the following recommendation:

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17 House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 17 April 2018, Meeting No. 92, 1540.

18 Correctional Service Canada (CSC), Detailed Action Plan, pp. 1–2.

19 OAG, Preparing Women Offenders for Release—Correctional Service Canada, Report 5 of the 2017 Fall Reports of the Auditor General of Canada, para. 5.34.

20 House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 17 April 2018, Meeting No. 92, 1625.

> Correctional Service Canada should implement an appropriate referral tool to assign women offenders to correctional programs in line with their risk of reoffending.[21]

In response, the Interim Commissioner said that CSC has "developed what we call the criminal risk index, which has been validated for both men and women,"[22] to assign women offenders to the appropriate correctional programs, particularly as regards program intensity. According to its action plan, CSC has started providing training on the use of the Criminal Risk Index to its employees, and "compliance reports are forthcoming in the new fiscal year [2018–2019]."[23] Additionally, CSC has implemented a referral tool that improves "the assignment of Indigenous male offenders to correctional programs."[24]

Consequently, the Committee recommends:

Recommendation 2 – Regarding employee training on the Criminal Risk Index

That *Correctional Service Canada* provide the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts with: A) an interim compliance report on the percentage of employees requiring training on the Criminal Risk Index who have received it by 30 September 2018; and, B) by 31 May 2019, a final report on the percentage of employees requiring such training who have received it as of 31 March 2019.

Delivery of Correctional Programs and Interventions

A. Effectiveness and Completion of Correctional Programs

The OAG found that CSC "had not assessed the effectiveness of its correctional programs in addressing the factors associated with a risk of reoffending ... [and] took too long to deliver correctional programs to women offenders, often preventing them from being prepared for their parole hearings when they were first eligible. On average, half of the offenders serving short-term sentences did not complete their correctional programs before they were first eligible for parole. This presented a barrier to the timely preparation for release for the majority of women offenders, who were first eligible for release on parole six months after admission."[25]

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21 OAG, Preparing Women Offenders for Release—Correctional Service Canada, Report 5 of the 2017 Fall Reports of the Auditor General of Canada, para. 5.36.

22 House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 17 April 2018, Meeting No. 92, 1630.

23 CSC, Detailed Action Plan, p. 3.

24 Ibid., p. 2.

25 OAG, Preparing Women Offenders for Release—Correctional Service Canada, Report 5 of the 2017 Fall Reports of the Auditor General of Canada, para. 5.42.

Therefore, the OAG made the following recommendation:

> Correctional Service Canada should examine the effectiveness of its correctional programs for women offenders to ensure that they appropriately address risk factors relevant to reoffending. Correctional Service Canada should also ensure that correctional programs are delivered at the appropriate time, intensity, and duration to support an offender's preparation for a parole hearing by her first day-parole eligibility date.[26]

According to its action plan, CSC is "evaluating the relevancy, effectiveness and efficiency of correctional reintegration programs for federally sentenced women and Aboriginal women. The results of the evaluation will guide decisions regarding any necessary improvements to the design and delivery of correctional programs for women offenders."[27] Moreover, the program evaluation should help improve "the structured interventions that target women's unique risk factors impacting successful reintegration and better prepare them for parole hearing by the first day parole eligibility date."[28]

Consequently, the Committee recommends:

Recommendation 3 – Regarding program effectiveness and timeliness

That *Correctional Service Canada* provide the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts with: A) an evaluation report on the relevancy, effectiveness and efficiency of correctional programs for women offenders by 31 December 2018; and, B) a report on the proportion of women inmates who have completed their correctional programs by their first parole hearing eligibility date in 2017–2018 and 2018–2019 by 31 May 2019.

B. Indigenous Women Offenders' Access to Correctional Programs and Interventions

According to the OAG's report, "Pathways Initiatives provide Indigenous offenders with intensive, one-on-one counselling and support consistent with Indigenous values, traditions, and beliefs. These initiatives operated at three of the five women's institutions, and each accommodated up to 10 offenders."[29]

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26 Ibid., para. 5.51.

27 CSC, Detailed Action Plan, p. 3.

28 Ibid., p. 4.

29 OAG, Preparing Women Offenders for Release—Correctional Service Canada, Report 5 of the 2017 Fall Reports of the Auditor General of Canada, para. 5.59.

Moreover, the "Healing Lodges are correctional institutions that use traditional healing approaches to help women offenders reintegrate into the community." The OAG reported that no "Healing Lodges operated in other regions [aside from the Prairies] had smaller numbers of Indigenous women offenders in custody. CSC has not examined whether Indigenous women offenders have sufficient access to Healing Lodges across its institutions."[30]

The OAG stated that "some Indigenous women offenders did not have access to culturally specific correctional programs and that Pathways Initiatives and Healing Lodges were not available at all five federal women's institutions."[31] In addition, "only one quarter of Indigenous women offenders serving short sentences and taking culturally specific correctional programs were able to complete them by their first parole eligibility date."[32]

Therefore, the OAG made the following recommendation:

> Correctional Service Canada should ensure Indigenous women offenders have sufficient and timely access to correctional programs at each women's institution, according to each offender's need and preference. Correctional Service Canada should ensure there is sufficient access to its Pathways Initiatives and Healing Lodges to meet the needs of Indigenous women offenders, and should examine alternative interventions in institutions with small numbers of Indigenous women offenders.[33]

In response, the Interim Commissioner explained that Aboriginal Intervention Centres (AICs) for women will be established "mostly for women offenders serving relatively short sentences."[34] Once they have completed their program, CSC will reassess their security classification either immediately or within 30 days following program completion. AICs have benefitted men: "We find that once they've completed their program and we reassess their security classification, either they're going to minimum—if they're not quite ready we place them into a pathways unit so they can continue to work with the elder—or their case is prepared for presentation to the Parole Board of Canada. We're hoping to see similar results for the women."[35]

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30 Ibid., para. 5.60.

31 Ibid., para. 5.52.

32 Ibid., para. 5.57.

33 Ibid., para. 5.61.

34 House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 17 April 2018, Meeting No. 92, 1600.

35 Ibid.

According to CSC's action plan, AICs for Indigenous women will take their unique needs into account, and "this model is scheduled to be implemented at women offender sites by summer 2018."[36] Furthermore, CSC "is currently providing AIC training to Women sites across the country."[37] Lastly, "CSC is currently exploring opportunities to enhance Indigenous women's access to Healing Lodges by working with Indigenous communities."[38]

Consequently, the Committee recommends:

Recommendation 4 – Regarding timely access to programs for Indigenous women inmates across the country

That, by 31 December 2018, *Correctional Service Canada* provide the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts with a report outlining all the programs offered to Indigenous women inmates—including Pathways and access to Healing Lodges—at each of the five federal women's institutions, as well as the proportion of Indigenous women inmates who have completed their correctional program by their first parole hearing eligibility date, by program.

C. Training and Work Release Programs

According to the OAG, "CORCAN is a special agency that provides offenders with meaningful employment while in custody to improve their job skills and chances for employment upon release. CORCAN employment was available at four of the five women's institutions, but not at the Healing Lodges."[39]

The OAG noted that CORCAN employed few women offenders. In 2016–2017, "only 29 women offenders participated for three months or more—the minimum time needed to gain employability skills." However, more "women offenders participated in vocational programs that taught specific skills, with 1,700 vocational training certificates issued."[40]

In addition, few work releases were issued to women offenders, and that number was decreasing even though CSC had built "minimum-security units outside the perimeter fences of four of its women's institutions, at a cost of $27 million, in part to promote work releases for women offenders."[41]

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36 CSC, Detailed Action Plan, p. 5.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid., p. 6.

39 OAG, Preparing Women Offenders for Release—Correctional Service Canada, Report 5 of the 2017 Fall Reports of the Auditor General of Canada, para. 5.67.

40 Ibid., para. 5.68.

41 Ibid., para. 5.70.

Therefore, the OAG made the following recommendation:

> Correctional Service Canada should increase the use of employment as well as work releases to support the successful reintegration of women offenders into the community.[42]

According to its action plan, CSC "will increase the delivery of the National Employment Skills Program for women offenders, as well as increase the opportunities for vocational certifications, on-the-job training, and work releases, in order to support their successful reintegration to the community."[43]

Consequently, the Committee recommends:

Recommendation 5 – Regarding the use of employment programs and work releases

That, by 31 May 2019, *Correctional Service Canada* provide the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts with a report regarding the change in the number and percentage of women inmates who used employment programs and work releases from 2017–2018 to 2018–2019.

Improvement of Mental Health Services

According to CSC research, 67% of women offenders suffer from mental illness such as anxiety, depression and schizophrenia. This figure includes the 12% of women offenders who have a serious mental illness (such as a major depressive, bipolar or psychotic disorder) "with at least some serious symptoms or impairment in a person's ability to function."[44]

A. Mental Health Assessments

According to the OAG, registered nurses "briefly assess women offenders for mental health issues within 24 hours of admission," and CSC "screened offenders again within 14 days of admission, as required, using the Computerized Mental Health Intake Screening System.... CSC's preliminary research stressed the need for further study to confirm that this tool's cut-off points appropriately identified women offenders needing further mental health assessment."[45]

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42 Ibid., para. 5.71.

43 CSC, Detailed Action Plan, p. 6.

44 OAG, Preparing Women Offenders for Release—Correctional Service Canada, Report 5 of the 2017 Fall Reports of the Auditor General of Canada, para. 5.74 and Exhibit 5.3.

45 Ibid., para. 5.82.

Women offenders "who are referred for further assessment have face-to-face meetings with members of the CSC mental health team." A second tool is used in these cases – the Mental Health Needs Scale – to evaluate the level of mental health services to assign. The OAG found that CSC "had not determined whether this scale's ratings were appropriate for women offenders. Also, CSC's mental health staff indicated that the tool did not help them prioritize offenders for mental health services."[46]

Therefore, the OAG made the following recommendation:

> Correctional Service Canada should ensure that it appropriately identifies women offenders who need mental health services and assigns them to the appropriate level of care.[47]

Regarding the validity of the mental health assessments, Jennifer Wheatley, Assistant Commissioner, stated that "the computerized mental health scale that we use on intake to screen all offenders has shown above 70% sensitivity in validity. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence in the [United Kingdom] says that 70% is what you need to be clinically appropriate."[48]

As for meeting needs with the appropriate level of care, CSC's response to the OAG's recommendation stated that, in "the 2016–17 fiscal year, CSC implemented an electronic health record. As a result, CSC can now monitor the level of care received by offenders in relation to their level of need. CSC can currently monitor this for 40 percent of women receiving treatment and will continue to improve data collection. Early results are promising—all women who were rated as high need received intensive mental health care."[49]

The Committee's recommendation pertaining to mental health assessments can be found at the end of Section B (Treatments Plans – Recommendation 6).

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46 Ibid., para. 5.83.

47 Ibid., para. 5.84.

48 House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 17 April 2018, Meeting No. 92, 1610.

49 OAG, Preparing Women Offenders for Release—Correctional Service Canada, Report 5 of the 2017 Fall Reports of the Auditor General of Canada, para. 5.84.

B. Treatment Plans

As noted by the OAG, CSC's guidelines require that "a treatment plan be completed for each woman offender identified with mental health issues." A review of the files selected by the OAG showed that "staff completed treatment plans for only 9 of 27 offenders who needed one – and only 1 was done within the required 60 days." Furthermore, the OAG noted that "treatment plans did not consistently document how the offenders responded to treatment or define longer-term objectives for treatment, as recommended by CSC's mental health guidelines."[50]

Therefore, the OAG made the following recommendation:

> Correctional Service Canada should complete mental health treatment plans on time for the women offenders who need one and should include the information required by Correctional Service Canada guidelines.[51]

According to CSC's action plan, a "monthly review of the timeliness and completeness of treatment plans for women offenders is [being] developed.... The use of the file audit tool will be monitored by the Mental Health Branch on a bi-annual basis."[52]

Therefore, the Committee recommends:

Recommendation 6 – Regarding the assessment of mental health needs, the prioritization of care and the completion of treatment plans

That, by 31 May 2019, *Correctional Service Canada* provide the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts with a report regarding: 1) the change in the percentage of women inmates who received mental health care that met their needs from 2016–2017 to 2018–2019; and, 2) the findings on the completion of mental health treatment plans for women inmates from the Mental Health Branch's first two file audits.

C. Access to Mental Health Services

The OAG noted that, in the case of women offenders identified with treatment needs, CSC "did not track whether they received appropriate mental health services in a timely manner."[53]

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50 Ibid., para. 5.85.

51 Ibid., para. 5.86.

52 CSC, Detailed Action Plan, p. 10.

53 OAG, Preparing Women Offenders for Release—Correctional Service Canada, Report 5 of the 2017 Fall Reports of the Auditor General of Canada, para. 5.94.

The OAG reported that there were "ongoing shortages of mental health care staff at each of the women's institutions" and that CSC "did not have a recruitment and retention strategy to fully staff these positions."[54]

According to the OAG, CSC had "up to 20 psychiatric care beds available for women offenders at its psychiatric care institution in Saskatoon." However, CSC "did not have active agreements in four of its five regions. CSC had one long-standing agreement in place with a secure psychiatric hospital in Montréal."[55]

Therefore, the OAG made the following recommendation:

> Correctional Service Canada should determine the capacity of mental health services needed to treat women offenders identified with mental illness, according to professionally accepted standards, and address any service-level gaps in a timely manner.[56]

According to its action plan, CSC is researching ways to improve the mental health care provided. Moreover, "CSC received $1.85M to increase intermediate mental health care capacity for women in maximum security at the 5 women's institutions and $3.69M to establish agreements to access an additional 10 in patient psychiatry beds."[57]

The Committee finds these developments encouraging, but would like CSC to better address the OAG report's recommendation. Consequently, it recommends:

Recommendation 7 – Regarding access to mental health services

That, by 31 May 2019, *Correctional Service Canada* (CSC) provide the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts with a progress report explaining: 1) the extent to which the mental health treatment of women inmates is tracked; 2) the status of a strategy to recruit and retain CSC mental health care staff; 3) the existing agreements between women's penal institutions and psychiatric care centres; and, 4) women offenders' access to mental health care, including the number and percentage of women inmates who could not receive care because of long wait lists.

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54 Ibid., para. 5.95.

55 Ibid., para. 5.96.

56 Ibid., para. 5.97.

57 CSC, Detailed Action Plan, p. 11.

D. Segregation and Enhanced Observation

The OAG reported that "some offenders who were identified with a serious mental illness had been placed in segregation," although use of segregation declined between 2014–2015 and 2016–2017.[58] Segregation involves "confining a woman offender to a cell within a separate unit or range of the institution so she cannot associate with others." In addition, a "segregated offender is entitled to leave her cell for at least two hours a day for exercise and a shower. The length of an offender's placement in segregation is based on individual risk and is normally determined through a series of mandatory reviews."[59]

According to the OAG, CSC "has acknowledged that segregation for those with serious mental illness should be limited. In August 2017, CSC updated its segregation policy to prohibit the segregation of offenders with serious mental illness with significant impairment."[60]

In addition, the OAG noted that CSC "also used cells in its segregation range to monitor offenders who were at imminent risk of self-injury or suicide. These offenders were placed under what CSC refers to as enhanced observation – an alternative form of isolation in cells in the segregation range." However, "in the view of mental health experts, it is not clinically appropriate to use cells in the segregation range to monitor offenders who are at risk of self-injury or suicide."[61]

Therefore, the OAG made the following recommendation:

> Correctional Service Canada should ensure that women offenders with serious mental illness with significant impairment are not placed in segregation. It should improve its oversight of offenders being monitored for self-injury or suicide under enhanced observation, as well as its oversight of offenders identified with serious mental illness with significant impairment. The use of cells on the segregation range to monitor women offenders at risk of self-injury or suicide should be discontinued.[62]

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58 OAG, Preparing Women Offenders for Release—Correctional Service Canada, Report 5 of the 2017 Fall Reports of the Auditor General of Canada, para. 5.98.

59 Ibid., Exhibit 5.4.

60 Ibid., para. 5.104.

61 Ibid., para. 5.105.

62 Ibid., para. 5.107.

According to CSC's action plan, "the work associated with relocation [of observation cells in segregation ranges] will be initiated during fiscal year 2018–2019."[63]

Consequently, the Committee recommends:

Recommendation 8 – Regarding the use of observation cells in segregation ranges

That, by 31 May 2019, *Correctional Service Canada* provide the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts with a report indicating whether all the observation cells located in segregation ranges in women's detention centres have been relocated and, if not, the reasons for the delay.

Release into the Community

The OAG reported that "73 percent of offenders first released from custody (299 of 411) were granted parole, a 15-percent increase from the previous three fiscal years. However, only one quarter of women offenders (74 of 299) were released on parole at their first eligibility date."[64]

The OAG also noted that CSC "increased its use of ... release plans, where Indigenous organizations or communities are part of the reintegration process." In addition, "Indigenous offenders with a ... release plan were more likely to be granted parole."[65]

According to the OAG, almost "half of the women offenders assessed with a low risk of reoffending delayed or waived their parole hearings. As a result, low-risk offenders remained in custody an average of eight months after their first parole eligibility date, and some were released only at their mandatory release date."[66]

Lastly, the OAG reported that CSC "could still have saved about $4 million in custody costs if the 225 women offenders released on parole in the 2016–17 fiscal year were prepared for and released by their first parole eligibility date."[67]

Therefore, the OAG made the following recommendation:

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63 CSC, Detailed Action Plan, p. 13.

64 OAG, Preparing Women Offenders for Release—Correctional Service Canada, Report 5 of the 2017 Fall Reports of the Auditor General of Canada, para. 5.115.

65 Ibid., para. 5.116.

66 Ibid., para. 5.119.

67 Ibid., para. 5.120.

> Correctional Service Canada should ensure that women offenders – particularly those assessed with a low risk of reoffending and who have successfully completed their correctional programs – are prepared for their parole hearings by the earliest parole eligibility date, to support their successful reintegration into the community.[68]

According to CSC's action plan, an "automated information report to identify women who are low risk and have completed programs and are past their parole eligibility date is complete."[69]

Consequently, the Committee recommends:

Recommendation 9 – Regarding the preparation of women inmates for their parole hearings

That, by 31 May 2019, *Correctional Service Canada* provide the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts with a report regarding the change in the percentage of women inmates who finished their correctional programs before their first parole hearing eligibility date.

CONCLUSION

The Committee concludes that, "while Correctional Service Canada provided women offenders with correctional programs, it did not do so in a manner that adequately supported their timely and successful reintegration into the community."[70] In particular, correctional programs were not delivered quickly enough for women inmates to complete them before they are eligible to apply for parole. Furthermore, "mental health teams did not have sufficient capacity to deliver mental health services to the high number of women offenders identified with mental illness."[71] The Committee has therefore made nine recommendations to Correctional Service Canada to improve the preparation of women inmates for release.

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68 Ibid., para. 5.121.

69 CSC, Detailed Action Plan, p. 14.

70 OAG, Preparing Women Offenders for Release—Correctional Service Canada, Report 5 of the 2017 Fall Reports of the Auditor General of Canada, para. 5.122.

71 Ibid., para. 5.87.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS AND ASSOCIATED DEADLINES

Table 1 – Summary of Recommended Actions and Associated Deadlines

Recommendation	Recommended Action	Deadline
Recommendation 1	*Correctional Service Canada* (CSC) should provide the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts with: A) a report outlining the results of CSC's study on the validity of the security classification tools; and, B) a report on the literature review regarding risk factors relevant to women offenders and their potential role in the security classification process.	30 June 2018 and 31 December 2018
Recommendation 2	CSC should provide the Committee with: A) an interim compliance report on the percentage of employees requiring training on the Criminal Risk Index who have received it; and, B) a final report on the percentage of employees requiring such training who have received it as of 31 March 2019.	30 September 2018 and 31 May 2019
Recommendation 3	CSC should provide the Committee with A) an evaluation report on the relevancy, effectiveness and efficiency of correctional programs for women offenders; and, B) a report on the proportion of women inmates who have completed their correctional programs by their first parole hearing eligibility date in 2017–2018 and 2018–2019.	31 December 2018 and 31 May 2019
Recommendation 4	CSC should provide the Committee with a report outlining all the programs offered to Indigenous women inmates—including Pathways and access to Healing Lodges—at each of the five federal women's institutions, as well as the proportion of Indigenous women inmates who have completed their correctional program by their first parole hearing eligibility date, by program.	31 December 2018

Recommendation	Recommended Action	Deadline
Recommendation 5	CSC should provide the Committee with a report regarding the change in the number and percentage of women inmates who used employment programs and work releases from 2017–2018 to 2018–2019.	31 May 2019
Recommendation 6	CSC should provide the Committee with a report regarding: 1) the change in the percentage of women inmates who received mental health care that met their needs from 2016–2017 to 2018–2019; and, 2) the findings on the completion of mental health treatment plans for women inmates from the Mental Health Branch's first two file audits.	31 May 2019
Recommendation 7	CSC should provide the Committee with a progress report explaining: 1) the extent to which the mental health treatment of women inmates is tracked; 2) the status of a strategy to recruit and retain CSC mental health care staff; 3) the existing agreements between women's penal institutions and psychiatric care centres; and, 4) women offenders' access to mental health care, including the number and percentage of women inmates who could not receive care because of long wait lists.	31 May 2019
Recommendation 8	CSC should provide the Committee with a report indicating whether all the observation cells located in segregation ranges in women's detention centres have been relocated and, if not, the reasons for the delay.	31 May 2019

Recommendation	Recommended Action	Deadline
Recommendation 9	CSC should provide the Committee with a report regarding the change in the percentage of women inmates who finished their correctional programs before their first parole hearing eligibility date.	31 May 2019

APPENDIX A
LIST OF WITNESSES

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
Correctional Service of Canada	2018/04/17	92
Kelley Blanchette, Deputy Commissioner for Women		
Anne Kelly, Interim Commissioner		
Jennifer Wheatley, Assistant Commissioner, Health Services		
Office of the Auditor General		
Michael Ferguson, Auditor General of Canada		
Carol McCalla, Principal		

REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the Committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this Report.

A copy of the relevant *Minutes of Proceedings* (Meetings Nos. 92 and 98) is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Kevin Sorenson, MP
Chair